

Which Gospel

Excerpts From Christianity Today Article (The Recent Truth About Seventh-day Adventism)

"A problem in the past evangelical evaluations of Adventism has been the failure to recognize its theological DIVERSITY."

"There is much DEBATE in that denomination's circles concerning the meaning of such doctrines as the atonement, sin Christ's nature, authority, and ESPECIALLY the meaning of righteousness by faith."

"The last three decades have brought much CONTROVERSY to Seventh-day Adventism as key doctrinal distinctives were challenged from WITHIN the denomination. This in-house doctrinal debate has resulted in several distinct factions and strong disagreement as to which doctrinal perspective represents `TRUE Adventism.'"

"Seventh-day Adventism is experiencing an IDENTITY crisis. Ironically, the present confusion is in direct CONTRAST to the confidence of Adventism's pioneers."

"The early Seventh-day Adventist knew exactly WHO THEY WERE. They were God's `REMNANT church.' `A special PEOPLE, with a special MESSAGE, for a special TIME.'"

"While they sometimes recognized members of other churches as genuine followers of Christ, they believed that they were God's SPECIAL movement in Earth's FINAL days. This exalted identity remained intact UNTIL Adventism's encounter with evangelicalism in the 1950s."

"Much of the doctrinal controversy that emerged in Adventism in the last several decades can be TRACED to their interaction with evangelicals in the 1950s."

"QOD (Questions on Doctrine) also REPUDIATED such commonly held traditional Adventist doctrines as the notion that Christ had inherited a human nature affected by the Fall, and an understanding that last-days believers would achieve sinless perfection. QOD was a clear statement of what would later be known as EVANGELICAL Adventism. It reflected a sense of CHANGE in how Adventists viewed themselves - and others."

"The central issue: Adventism's UNIQUENESS. Would it continue in the direction set in QOD? Or would Adventism return to more TRADITIONAL understandings?"

"At least SIX Adventist congregations have adopted the WORSHIP style and kingdom THEOLOGY of John Wimber's Vineyard Fellowship. This is REMARKABLE in a church that has steadfastly resisted the charismatic renewal, but it shows the ADAPTABILITY of Adventism."

"Evangelical Adventism: Evangelical Adventism can be traced to the Adventist scholars who DIALOGUED with Martin and Barnhouse, and who produced the volume QOD... QOD had REPUDIATED the long-standing Adventist belief that Jesus Christ had taken a sinful human nature at His incarnation."

"Traditional Adventism: QOD's evangelical emphasis had ROBBED Adventism of some of its distinctiveness... particularly... the sanctuary doctrine and the human nature of Christ."

"Traditional Adventism also has a distinct view concerning RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH."

"Liberal Adventism: In part, Liberal Adventism comes out of that churches attempt to achieve theological and cultural RESPECTABILITY. In the 1950s and 1960s, many Adventist students began receiving graduate degrees from NON-ADVENTIST universities. In many cases, the schools attended by these Adventists were theologically LIBERAL. Thus Adventist scholars were influenced by modern biblical CRITICISM and liberal theology."

"Liberal Adventism is comfortable with DIVERSITY of practice and PLURALISM of thought. While it emphasizes Adventism's distinctiveness (Sabbath, health), it sometimes seems to IGNORE historic Christian orthodoxy. Liberal Adventism is not concerned AT ALL with maintaining a `remnant' identity like that of the nineteenth century pioneers."